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I.

DR. MCGIFFERT'S HISTORICAL METHODS.

PROFESSOR MCGIFFERT'S *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age* came before the world with more than ordinary claims to attention. It had the novelty of being an original contribution to the literature of the subject by an American scholar, and the further novelty of reaching its results by methods hitherto more familiar to the German than to the English reader. It was issued as a volume of the "International Theological Library" and deemed worthy to be associated with the other works of that series emanating from well-known theologians and designed for the use of theological students on either side of the Atlantic. As such, it was ushered into the world with the apparent sanction of those who, as editors of the series, are presumably responsible for the selection of the writers, if not for the indorsement of their general views. And it was sent forth under the imprint of an eminent publishing firm long and honorably known for its services in introducing to the English public translations of Continental theology and not less enterprising of late in the publication of new works, English or American, in that domain.* It is a book, moreover, marked by freshness, vigor and adequate scholarship as well as by readiness of resource, power of ingenious combination, and ample license of conjecture, discarding commonly received opinions and advancing others with singular freedom and self-confidence.

* [Dr. Dickson's allusion is to the well-known publishing house of Messrs. T. & T. Clark, of Edinburgh, by which the work was issued in Great Britain. His words of praise would, however, apply equally well, *mutatis mutandis*, to the American publishers, Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons.—EDITORS.]

worthy performance of such a task would be welcome to all. What does, however, yield ground of complaint is that, operating under this broad definition, what we get in the sphere of the history of primitive and early religion is not a history of rationalistic movements, but a rationalized history of religion itself. Under the cover of a history of rationalistic opposition to religion, the author thus gives us a rationalistic account of the origin of religion and of the Jewish and Christian systems, and thus manages to represent all subsequent rationalism as just the continued protest of thoughtfulness against combined superstition and fraud. This postulation of the extremest results of "freethinking" at the basis of its history, fairly transforms the whole volume from a rational history into a campaign document for historical rationalism. That much of its value is thereby evaporated is undoubtable: but not all of it. There remains the interest inherent in the historic presentation of the naturalistic conception, and all along the line there emerge, in mode of treatment, incidental remarks and adduction of historic facts, points of the intensest interest. These increase in number and value alike as the work proceeds: and it is not until the author reaches the eighteenth century that the interest of his book as a history becomes great. But even in the earlier portions of his work there are matters that engage the attention. Among these may be enumerated the sharp opposition to the view that religion is a primitive endowment of man, and the consequent persistent polemic against Mr. Andrew Lang's *The Making of Religion*; and the use that is made of the extremest results of the so-called "Higher Criticism" in the construction offered of the history of the religion of Israel and its issue in "Jesuitism," as he calls Christianity, while yet the weaknesses of our "Higher Critics" are clearly perceived. Remarks might be culled here and there which it would well repay the advocates of rationalistic criticism in the Churches carefully to ponder. Take, for example, just this one: "That the clerical exponents of the higher criticism should in the face of their own results continue to speak of the 'inspiration' of their texts will not surprise the reader who has noted the analogous phenomena in the history of the religious systems of antiquity" (p. 395). The book, then, though certainly not an unbiased history and in large part, in fact, not history at all, yet is not without its value and may very profitably be read along with such a treatise as Farrar's *History of Free Thought* or Hurst's *History of Rationalism* in order to keep in mind how the matter is represented to themselves by the Naturalists themselves.—

A Handbook of Comparative Religion. By Rev. S. H. Kellogg, D.D., LL.D., Missionary to India, Author of *The Light of Asia* and *the Light of the World*, *The Genesis and Growth of Religion*, etc. 16mo, pp. viii, 179. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1899.) In addition to the claim which this little book makes on our attention in its own right as an admirable sketch of a difficult subject, it attracts our interest very strongly by reason of two facts extrinsic to its own pages. One is the pathetic circumstance that it came to our hands at the same time with the news of the accidental death of its lamented author by a fall from his bicycle in the Indian hills, and so assumes much the character of a last legacy from his hands. The other is advertised to its readers by the cartouch on the side of the volume, bearing the legend of *Westminster Handbooks*. It is in fact the opening issue of a series of much needed handbooks on the fundamental topics of theological research, now in preparation by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, and as such demands and receives our most cordial welcome. It is no mean compliment to the booklet that it fulfills our expectations in both aspects. It is a tolerably long series of volumes that have from time

to time come to us from the fluent and always thoughtful pen of Dr. Kellogg—from his *Hindi Grammar*, epoch-making in its time and still doubtless the leading handbook to the intricacies of that tongue, through his *Jews in Prophecy and Fulfillment*, *From Death to Resurrection*, *Commentary on Leviticus*, to two treatises on themes more kindred to that of the present volume—his *Stone Lectures on The Genesis and Growth of Religion*, and his earlier study of Buddhism in its relation to Christianity, published under the title of *The Light of Asia and the Light of the World*. In everything he has given us, the sound scholar, the acute thinker, the rapid generalizer, the earnest soldier of Christ exhibits himself: and all these qualities repeat themselves here. On the other hand, no volume could have better introduced the new series of *Westminster Handbooks* or given them a better model of form and contents than this simply and lucidly written treatise: its presence at the head of the series will not only be an example but a guarantee of the excellence of the whole. Dr. Kellogg has taken his subject at the foot of the letter: and what he gives us is distinctively a comparison of the great world religions. He does not here write either a philosophy of religion or a history of the several religions of the world; but a comparative account of the chief world religions in their teachings upon the primary topics of God, sin, salvation, the future and morals. These topics supply the subjects of the several chapters, which form the whole central mass of the book. They are preceded by two brief chapters on the classification of religions and the fundamental agreements between all religions; and are followed by a comprehensive chapter on the relation of the world religions to Christianity. Admonished by the brevity of the space at his disposal to a necessary selection, he confines his survey moreover to the main religions now living in the world—to Christianity, Islam, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taouism. His method is in each chapter to state the doctrine of each of these on the topic in hand, one after another and each in contrast to the preceding. Thus each chapter is welded together as a clear exhibition of the teaching of them all upon its special topic. The effect is to make Christianity, which is taken up first, the norm by which each is judged. But the comparison of them as wholes with it is reserved to the last chapter. The treatment, as already remarked, is simple and direct and the book is very readable and manifests anew the possibility of discussing an abstruse subject in a way capable of commanding the interest of the unlearned while yet presenting the fruits of a very sound learning indeed. It is decidedly a book “for the general,” and will give the reader a clearer, more exact and even broader knowledge of the relations of the great world religions to one another, and above all of the relations of Christianity to them all, than he can easily obtain elsewhere, though he waded through many volumes and stumbled through jungles of technicalities. There is little to be said in criticism: chiefly this—that it seems a pity that a little more was not said of the widely spread “Animism” which underlies and conditions so many of the highest forms of natural religion, as well as itself constitutes so large a part of the religion of savage races. Do we need any further categories in classifying religions (from Dr. Kellogg’s point of view) except the three: theistic, pantheistic, atheistic? And do we not need from the very outset to set apart Christianity from all the others as (with its preparation in Judaism) the one religion given by God to men as over against the religions made by man in feeling after God if haply they may find Him? It is quite true as Dr. Kellogg says (p. 162), that the heathen religions are consistently represented in the Bible not “as expressing an effort of man after communion with God, but, instead, as formal revolt against Him.” But this does not seem to negative the distribution just offered, but only to express the relation of the two radically different religion forms from another view-point. It seems

to us that Dr. Kellogg is led by his view-point to lay too much stress on the survival of the revelational elements in the ethnic religions: set aside Mohammedanism, and we doubt if there can be discovered in any of the rest a trace of primitive revelation preserved, or of Christian truth assimilated—apart, of course, from certain loan elements derived from latter-day partial evangelization. The effect of Christianity on the world religions into contact with which it has come is, in fact, a subject apart—and one, let us say, which deserves some careful critical study. A curious instance of it may be found recorded for us by Miss Kingsley, in her *West African Studies*. — *West African Studies*. By Mary H. Kingsley, author of *Travels in West Africa*. With Illustrations and Maps. 8vo, pp. xxi, 639. (London: Macmillan & Co.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1899.) This is a big book Miss Kingsley has given us this time—big in every application of the word. Of course its real subject is “Fetish,” to which the main portion of it is directly given, while all the rest is intended to make it understandable. Miss Kingsley still pleads for a wider use of the word than is common, and identifies it, indeed, with that pantheistic world-view common to the Western African savage at the one end of the social scale and Spinoza and Goethe at the other. “If you want, for example, to understand the position of man in nature according to Fetish, there is, as far as I know,” she says, “no clearer statement of it made than is made by Goethe in his superb *Prometheus*” (p. 121). The only difference between the two ends are due to the differing characteristics of the peoples and the differing environments through which expression is modified. The value of the book lies particularly, therefore, in its first-hand study of West African religion; and in that field it is from the first an authority and is likely to become a classic. To the missionary and the student of missions it has also a direct message. It is exceedingly interesting to note Miss Kingsley’s opinion, for example, of the source of the attraction of Christianity to the African. Shortly, it lies in its Christology. “The African has a great over-God, and below him lesser spirits, including man; but the African has not in West Africa, nor, so far as I have been able to ascertain, elsewhere on the whole continent, a God-man, a thing that directly connects man with the great over-God. This thing appeals to the African when it is presented to him” (p. 127). It is equally interesting to observe her conception of the sources of weakness in the impact of Christianity in West Africa. Briefly, these are summed up in the two circumstances that the African has a conscience and that humanitarianism has watered the efforts of missions. The African mind is to her view a supremely logical one, and the African conscience is inclined to put his religion into practice. “Now conscience, when conditioned by Christianity,” she says, “is an exceedingly difficult thing for a trader to manage satisfactorily to himself.” This makes the African, who is primarily a trader, rather chary of Christianity—having a conscience, he is disinclined to put it into such bonds. On the other hand, the intrusion of “philanthropy” into missions, in her view, has deeply injured missionary success. “The missionary pure and simple,” she says, in her sprightly way, “is a man who loves God more than he loves himself or any man. . . . The philanthropist is a person who loves man; but he or she is frequently no better than people who kill lap-dogs by overfeeding, or who shut up skylarks in cages. While it is quite conceivable to me, for example, that a missionary could kill a man to save his soul, a philanthropist would kill his soul to save his life, and there is in this a difference” (p. 321). With Miss Kingsley’s assault on the Crown Colony system we have no concern: surely her first-hand testimony to its working will be heard. It remains only to say that the book is written not only with a knowledge and insight that makes it an authority on its main subject, but in a style which gives it a fascination which is irresistible.